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Lead Adviser
(Regulation and
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My role involves working to protect areas of land known as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

There are over 4,000 SSSIs in England, covering about 7% of its land area. Over half of them are internationally important for wildlife and geological features, which are under pressure from development, pollution, climate change and poor management.

Protecting SSSIs is a shared responsibility and an investment for the benefit of future generations. When sites are damaged through deliberate or unsympathetic land management, that's where I get involved. Incidents are usually reported by members of the public and can range from minor damage caused by off-roading vehicles to destruction of forests and habitats by deliberate acts.

All reports need to be investigated and key to a successful result is good communication skills. Often, it's a case of explaining to the offender how they've breached the legislation then agreeing on a resolution. Serious offences, however, need full investigations with written statements from witnesses as well as interviews with offenders under caution.

In addition to the practical aspects of the job, I also have to think about the 'big picture'. Regular team calls and face-to-face meetings provide the ideal opportunity to be briefed by senior staff on wider issues, receive training or exchange ideas.

Without doubt the role can often be challenging but also rewarding. After all, everybody benefits from a cleaner, healthier thriving natural environment.